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Summary record of the 50th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 23 December 1999, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Ms. Wensley ..... (Australia)
Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. Mselle

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Agenda item 118: Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations

Action taken on certain items

Biennial programme of work of the Fifth Committee for 2000-2001

Other matters

Completion of the work of the Fifth Committee at the main part of the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly

The meeting was called to order at 5.45 p.m.

Agenda item 119: Programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999 (*continued*)

Final budget appropriations and income estimates for the biennium 1998-1999 (A/C.5/54/L.39)

Draft resolution A/C.5/54/L.39

1. *Draft resolution A/C.5/54/L.39 was adopted.*

Agenda item 121: Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001 (*continued*)

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.2/54/L.73 concerning agenda item 99 (f) (*continued*) (A/C.5/54/43 and A/C.5/54/44)

2. **The Chairman** proposed that, on the basis of the report of the Secretary-General and the observations and recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, the Fifth Committee should decide to inform the General Assembly that:

"Should the General Assembly adopt draft resolution A/C.2/54/L.73, an additional requirement of $646,400 would arise in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001, under section 11A (Trade and development) ($616,400), and under section 26 (Public information) ($30,000). These requirements would represent a charge against the contingency fund and would be considered in the context of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001.

"The Committee recalls General Assembly resolution 45/248 B of 21 December 1990, in which it reaffirms that the Fifth Committee is the appropriate Main Committee of the General Assembly entrusted with responsibilities for administrative and budgetary matters.

"In addition, the convening in New York of the intergovernmental preparatory committee of the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, away from its established headquarters, would constitute an exemption to section I, paragraph 4, of resolution 40/243."

3. *It was so decided.*

Revised estimates resulting from resolutions and decisions adopted by the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 1999 (continued) (A/54/7/Add.2 and A/54/443 and Add.1)

4. **The Chairman** proposed that the Committee should recommend to the General Assembly the following draft decision:

"*The General Assembly*,

"*Takes note* of the reports of the Secretary-General on the revised estimates resulting from resolutions and decisions of the Economic and Social Council at its organizational and substantive sessions of 1999."

5. *It was so decided.*

6. **Ms. Buergo Rodríguez** (Cuba) said that, while her delegation had no objection to the draft decision, it trusted that the information it had requested would be made available at the resumed session to enable the Committee to take appropriate decisions on outstanding issues.

Revised estimates under section 3 (Political affairs) and section 5 (Peacekeeping operations) (continued) (A/54/7/Add.11; A/C.5/54/40)

7. **The Chairman** proposed that the Committee should recommend to the General Assembly the following draft decision:

"*The General Assembly*,

"*Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/C.5/54/40 on the revised estimates under section 3 (Political affairs) and section 5 (Peacekeeping operations) and of the observations and recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions thereon (A/54/7/Add.11);

"*Approves* the charge of total requirements of $3,755,800 against the provision proposed for special political missions under section 3 (Political affairs) of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001 in accordance

with General Assembly resolution 53/206 and concurs that the related provision for the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator (UNSCO), already included in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001, be transferred from section 5 (Peacekeeping operations) to section 3 (Political affairs)."

8. **Ms. Merchant** (Norway) proposed that, as agreed in informal consultations, the title "Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator" should be replaced by "Office of the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority".

9. *The draft decision, as orally amended, was adopted.*

Utilization of the provision for special political missions under section 3 (Political affairs) (A/C.5/54/45)

10. **Mr. Mselle** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that, in the context of the budget outline for 2000-2001, an amount of $86.2 million had been authorized by the General Assembly for special missions. The actual charge against that authorization would depend on the special missions authorized by the Security Council. The Secretary-General's note (A/C.5/54/45) indicated that the $86.2 million had been recosted to roughly $90.4 million. It also indicated that at the current session the amount to be charged against that recosted provision totalled approximately $55.4 million, leaving an unallocated balance of $35,024,100. The Advisory Committee recommended that the General Assembly should take note of the Secretary-General's note (A/C.5/54/45).

11. **The Chairman** proposed that the Committee should recommend to the General Assembly that it should take note of the Secretary-General's note on the utilization of the provision for special political missions under section 3 (Political affairs).

12. *It was so decided.*

Contingency fund: consolidated statement of programme budget implications and revised estimates (A/C.5/54/46)

13. **Mr. Mselle** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the report of the Secretary-General (A/C.5/54/46) indicated that an amount of roughly $2.7 million had been charged to the contingency fund and that the balance remaining was $15.7 million. However, that figure had now been revised and a total of $16,362,700 remained for future use. The Advisory Committee recommended that the General Assembly should take note of the balance of $16,362,700 remaining in the contingency fund for the proposed programme budget for 2000-2001.

14. **The Chairman** proposed that the Committee should recommend to the General Assembly that it should take note of the report of the Secretary-General on the contingency fund: consolidated statement of programme budget implications and revised estimates (A/C.5/54/46) and note that a balance of $16,362,700 would remain in the contingency fund.

15. *It was so decided.*

Questions relating to the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001 (A/C.5/54/L.35)

Draft resolution A/C.5/54/L.35

16. **Mr. Odaga-Jalomayo** (Uganda), introduced draft resolution A/C.5/54/L.35 on questions relating to the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001 submitted by the Chairman.

17. By dint of strenuous efforts the Committee had achieved almost complete consensus on the programme budget. All delegations had shown great flexibility and a deep understanding of the issues at stake. If no single delegation was perfectly satisfied with the details of programmes or the overall level of spending, at least the dissatisfaction had been equitably distributed. New initiatives had been accommodated through restraint and in some cases reductions in support costs, particularly for travel, consultancy, general temporary assistance and general expenses. The resulting agreement represented a balanced package that would allow full implementation of mandated programmes and further the central purposes of the Organization.

He hoped the draft resolution could be adopted without a vote.

18. In paragraph 62 of the draft resolution, the word "not" should be replaced by the word "neither". Between paragraphs 103 and 104, a new paragraph should be added, reading:

> "*Requests* the Secretary-General to review, as a matter of priority, resource requirements for the high-level intergovernmental event on financing for development and the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries and submit a report for its consideration at the first resumed fifty-fourth session."

19. In paragraph 122, the word in square brackets, "[particularly]", should be deleted. Following paragraph 180, the heading "Part IX" and related paragraph 181 should be deleted in full.

20. In the annex to the draft resolution, the following revisions should be made. In paragraph 15 the number "56" should be replaced by the number "61". Paragraph 18 should read as follows:

> "Renumber old paragraphs 4.6, 4.7, 4.8 and 4.12 as paragraphs 4.8, 4.9, 4.10 and 4.11, respectively."

Between paragraphs 71 and 72, a new paragraph should be added, reading:

> "In paragraph 22.50, replace the words 'and normative components' by 'in consultation with and upon the request of the Member State concerned'."

In paragraph 80, the words "The General Assembly decided" should be followed by the words "in its resolution 53/221". The words "at the end of paragraph 27C.31" should be inserted at the beginning of paragraph 81.

21. **Mr. Barnwell** (Guyana) said that his delegation was particularly pleased with the provisions of the draft resolution in paragraph 103 establishing a unit for landlocked developing countries and small island developing States and in paragraph 179 establishing a permanent interpretation service at the United Nations Office at Nairobi. His delegation attached great importance to the process of inclusion and consensus-building in decision-making, which served to create competencies and strengthen the Organization. On behalf of the Group of 77 and China, he wished to thank the Chairman, the Bureau and all Secretariat offices concerned for accommodating the Committee's efforts to arrive at a decision.

22. **Mr. Takahara** (Japan), speaking in explanation of position, said that his delegation was pleased that the Committee was to adopt the draft resolution on the programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001 without a vote. It was a primary responsibility of Member States to ensure the financial stability of the Organization, and it was therefore essential for the General Assembly to adopt the budget before the start of the biennium. The programme budget should contain the minimum necessary resource requirements to implement mandated activities, although every effort should be made to use the most cost-effective methods. His delegation found the overall level of budgeted resources acceptable and felt that, by and large, the programme budget reflected the priorities of the Organization.

23. However, his delegation had noted with grave concern that some proposals submitted during negotiations would go beyond the responsibilities of Member States under the Charter and established procedure. It was the junction of the Secretary-General to estimate the resource requirements for mandated programme activities and submit budget proposals to the General Assembly for approval. During the last stage of negotiations on the draft resolution, a number of specific add-ons had been proposed and accepted upon strong insistence which were not based on the Secretary-General's proposals or related to additional programme activities. His delegation was deeply disturbed by such departures from established budgetary procedures and would caution the Committee members against such a trend.

24. **Ms. Shearouse** (United States of America) said that the coordinator was to be commended for his extraordinary efforts in steering the Committee through difficult and complex negotiations. Regrettably, her delegation was unable to associate itself with the decision to be taken in the Committee on the programme budget, as it was not in keeping with her Government's policy of strict budgetary discipline.

25. *Draft resolution A/C.5/54/L.35, as orally revised, was adopted.*

26. **Mr. Yussuf** (United Republic of Tanzania), speaking on behalf of the East African Community

countries of Kenya, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania, said that Guyana's able leadership of the Group of 77 and China had made it possible to resolve issues in the budget negotiations of great importance to Africa, including the establishment of a permanent interpretation service at the United Nations Office at Nairobi, the reinstatement of a P-3 post of Kiswahili Producer and the recruitment of an additional G-6 assistant to the Kiswahili radio broadcasting programme, and the strengthening of the African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and Treatment of Offenders. He hoped that the kind of cooperation demonstrated on issues of importance to the continent would continue in the years to come, in what some were calling the "African Century".

27. **Mr. Elgammal** (Egypt) recalled that it had been agreed in informal consultations that, in connection with the adoption of the proposed programme budget, the Secretariat would submit a statement concerning the savings of $1,075 million anticipated under section 26. His delegation would like that statement, even though it was late.

28. **Mr. Sach** (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division) said that clarification had been sought in informal consultations about redeployable resources for international radio broadcasting arrangements. Such resources existed in the provision for general operating expenses of the Department of Public Information. In the light of the savings which had been achieved during the biennium 1998-1999, and on the assumption that the same expenditure levels could be replicated in the biennium 2000-2001, it was anticipated that savings of approximately $1,075 million could be realized under section 26 (Public information) of the proposed programme budget and redeployed for the funding of international radio broadcasting.

29. **Mr. Elgammal** (Egypt) said that his delegation was satisfied with that response.

Draft report of the Fifth Committee
(A/C.5/54/L.36 (Parts I and II))

30. **The Chairman** invited the Committee to take a decision on the recommendations contained in part II of the draft report (A/C.5/54/L.36). She recalled that draft resolution I had already been adopted.

Draft resolution II

31. *Draft resolution II was adopted.*

Draft resolution III

32. **The Chairman** said that in draft resolution III, part VI, entitled "Contingency fund", the figure of "15,762,700 dollars" should be changed to "16,362,700 dollars".

33. *Draft resolution III, as orally revised, was adopted.*

Draft resolution IV

34. *Draft resolution IV was adopted.*

Draft resolution V

35. *Draft resolution V was adopted.*

Agenda item 124: Pattern of conferences (*continued*)
(A/C.5/54/L.19)

Draft resolution A/C.5/54/L.19

36. **Ms. Achouri** (Tunisia) introduced draft resolution A/C.5/54/L.19. In section D, paragraph 10, the words "*Notes* the concern that some documents" should be replaced by: "*Notes with concern* that some of the documents".

37. **Mr. Moktefi** (Algeria) asked what the time-frame would be for the implementation of section B, paragraph 24.

38. **Mr. Halbwachs** (Controller) said that draft resolution A/C.5/54/L.35, just adopted by the Committee, included the decision to establish a permanent interpretation service at Nairobi (para. 179). The draft report (A/C.5/54/L.36) included provision for 20 posts for that purpose, covering a two-year period from 1 January 2000. It would not be possible to recruit 20 staff by 1 January 2000, but the posts would be filled as quickly as possible.

39. **Mr. Moktefi** (Algeria) recalled that initially a date had been included in paragraph 24, but it had been taken out pending the adoption of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001. His delegation therefore proposed that the words "not later than January 2001" should be added at the end of paragraph 24.

40. **Mr. Ekorong A Dong** (Cameroon) said that his delegation believed that an error had been made; it had been agreed in informal consultations that the permanent interpretation service at Nairobi should be established not later than January 2001. The error in paragraph 24 should therefore be corrected by adding the words proposed by the representative of Algeria.

41. **Mr. Sulaiman** (Syrian Arab Republic), **Mr. Amolo** (Kenya), **Mr. Abdalla** (Sudan) and **Mr. Kandanga** (Namibia) said that they supported the proposal by the representative of Algeria.

42. **Ms. Shearouse** (United States of America) said that when draft resolution A/C.5/54/L.19 had been adopted in informal consultations, there had been an agreement that the text would remain unchanged. While her delegation had no difficulties with the proposed amendment, it sought clarification as to whether there were financial implications associated with the addition.

43. **Mr. Vihervās** (Finland), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that the European Union believed that the agreed text of paragraph 24 was as contained in draft resolution A/C.5/54/L.19.

44. **Mr. Getachew** (Ethiopia) said that it was his delegation's understanding that paragraph 24 of the draft resolution included the words "not later than 2001".

45. **Mr. Moktefi** (Algeria) said that alternative dates, January 2001 and January 2002, had been proposed for the establishment of a permanent interpretation service at Nairobi. January 2001 had been retained so as to ensure that the service was established as soon as possible. The establishment of the service should not have financial implications, since it was provided for in the proposed budget. His delegation was therefore surprised by the reaction to its proposal.

46. **Mr. Al Oumar** (Mali) said that his delegation fully supported the comments by the representative of Algeria. The establishment of the interpretation service was already included in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001; delegations were simply asking that it should be given priority.

47. **Mr. Sach** (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division) said that from a budgetary point of view the proposal by the representative of Algeria made no difference to the estimates which the Committee had already adopted, which provided for 20 posts for both years of the biennium. The intent of the proposal would be to ensure that the decision was effected in terms of the staff being in place. The date had implications for human resources in terms of early recruitment to fill the posts.

48. **Mr. Sulaiman** (Syrian Arab Republic), supported by **Mr. Abdalla** (Sudan) said that the spelling of the word "Id" in the English text of paragraph 6 of section A of the draft resolution should be corrected to "Eid" so that the names of the two holidays would read "Eid al-Fitr" and "Eid al-Adha".

49. *Draft resolution A/C.5/54/L.19, as orally amended, was adopted.*

Agenda item 118: Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations

Action taken on certain items (A/C.5/54/L.37)

Draft decision A/C.5/54/L.37

50. **Mr. Chowdhury** (Bangladesh) introduced draft decision A/C.5/54/L.37, submitted on behalf of the Chairman. Early in the resumed session of the General Assembly the Committee should take up the question of how to further improve its working methods.

51. **Ms. Powles** (New Zealand), speaking also on behalf of Australia, Canada and the South Pacific Countries (SOPAC) of Fiji, the Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, said, with reference to the Committee's programme of work at the resumed session, that the delegations on whose behalf she spoke attached the highest priority to the item on results-based budgeting. It was therefore deeply regrettable that neither the Fifth Committee nor the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions had found the time at the main part of the General Assembly's current session to take up the Secretary-General's most recent report on results-based budgeting (A/54/456) in its entirety. She hoped that the Committee would accord priority to the item in its programme of work for 2000.

52. Results-based budgeting represented an evolutionary rather than revolutionary management tool. Its consideration required an open mind on the part of delegations; the views of other United Nations bodies and international agencies which already used

results-based budgeting principles would be useful to the Committee in its future discussions. The Advisory Committee should brief itself on results-based budgeting so that the Fifth Committee could benefit from its views in the search for more progressive methods of planning and budgeting.

53. **Mr. Park Hae-yun** (Republic of Korea), joined by **Ms. Merchant** (Norway), **Mr. Hays** (United States of America) and **Mr. Vihervās** (Finland), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that his delegation wished to associate itself with the statement just made by the representative of New Zealand.

54. **Ms. Aragon** (Philippines) said that the Committee should allocate sufficient time early in the first part of the resumed session for consideration of the item on human resources management.

55. *Draft decision A/C.5/54/L.37 was adopted.*

Biennial programme of work of the Fifth Committee for 2000-2001 (A/C.5/54/L.38)

Draft decision A/C.5/54/L.38

56. *Draft decision A/C.5/54/L.38 was adopted.*

Other matters

57. **Mr. Sulaiman** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that his delegation had been surprised that, when informal consultations had been suspended from 4.30 p.m. to 5 p.m. in order to enable those fasting to break their fast, the Secretariat building cafeteria had been closed, even though it and the Viennese Café should have been open the whole time the Committee was meeting. The cafeteria managers had said that it had been the United Nations Administration that had asked them to close the cafeteria at 4 p.m. He reiterated that the rules governing the outside company running the cafeteria were those governing the work of the Organization and deeply regretted the Secretariat's lack of consideration in that regard, not only in relation to the fast but also as a matter of general principle.

58. **Mr. Monayair** (Kuwait) said that the issue raised by the Syrian representative had been a matter of concern for many Islamic delegations, most of whose members had not broken their fast that day, after many hours of work. His delegation was surprised and extremely disappointed at the lack of facilities on that occasion and hoped that the Secretariat would make proper arrangements for the month of Ramadan, which would fall increasingly within the General Assembly session period in coming years. His delegation had not insisted on the adoption of any specific measure, out of its primary concern to cooperate with the Chairman, but what had happened made it somewhat reluctant to endorse the current arrangements.

Completion of the work of the Fifth Committee at the main part of the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly

59. After an exchange of courtesies, in which **Ms. Clark** (Barbados), on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, **Mr. Ekorong A Dong** (Cameroon), on behalf of the Group of African States, **Ms. Krahulcová** (Czech Republic), on behalf of the Group of Eastern European States, **Mr. Hays** (United States of America), **Mr. Myck** (Luxembourg), on behalf of the Western European and Other States, **Mr. Chowdhury** (Bangladesh), on behalf of the Group of Asian States, **Mr. Abdalla** (Sudan), on behalf of the Group of Arab States, **Mr. Adam** (Israel), **Mr. Barnwell** (Guyana), on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and **Mr. Odaga-Jalomayo** (Uganda) took part, **the Chairman** declared that the Fifth Committee had completed its work at the main part of the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly.

The meeting rose at 8.20 p.m.